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SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MK](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: GREECE/MACEDONIA: PM TELLS PARLIAMENT "ONE NAME"
THAT IS "GEOGRAPHIC"

REF: HOVENIER/EUR-SE EMAIL OF 2/29/08

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED -- PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) During the PM's "Question Time" at the Greek Parliament, Prime Minister Karamanlis stated clearly that Greece seeks one international name for all uses, and rejected any compound names that would "describe the existing type of government" in Skopje. These statements further limit the GOG's room for maneuver on this issue; Ambassador Speckhard will meet with FM Bakoyannis 3/3 to gauge where things stand. Meanwhile, weekend polls indicated that 8 in 10 Greeks believe the GOG should veto Macedonia's NATO membership absent an agreed solution on the name. End Summary.

Question

¶2. (U) At the 2/29 Parliamentary "Question Time," far-right LA.OS party leader Karatzafieris raised a number of questions on the Macedonia name issue (exact quotes e-mailed to EUR/SE and Embassy Skopje). In response, PM Karamanlis said the following:

-- One Name For All: Karamanlis said Greece's "aim" is a name that will "be in use by all - erga omnes," adding that this had also been the "objective" of previous Security Council resolutions.

-- No Description of Existing Government: With regard to what type of name Greece would accept, Karamanlis ruled out any name that "describes the existing type of government" in Macedonia. Such a name "cannot constitute a solution." Karamanlis added that this name should be "geographic."

-- Relations with Macedonia: Karamanlis said Greece supports the "stability and progress" of Macedonia, and expressed desire to "develop economic and political relations fully."

-- Potential Veto of NATO Membership: Karamanlis said "our position of no solution - no invitation is clear," adding that if there is no solution there is "no ground" for Macedonia "to join NATO," as NATO membership is predicated upon good neighborly relations. Karamanlis termed Macedonia "intransigent," noting that Greece has "made big and constructive steps," and it is now time for Macedonia to do the same.

Popular Sentiment

13. (U) Meanwhile, weekend press reported widely on additional polling data showing that 8 in 10 Greeks feel the government should veto Macedonia's NATO membership absent a solution on the name dispute. At the same time, Greeks are evenly divided (48 percent each) about whether the battle for the name has already been lost. Polling data also indicated that no potential name using the term "Macedonia" received the support of over 50 percent of the Greek population with the "Democratic Republic of Upper Macedonia," receiving the highest level of support at 43 percent.

SPECKHARD